

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES REGIMENT



**BRIGADIER GENERAL  
RUSSELL W. VOLCKMANN**

Inducted May 2016



Brigadier General Russell W. Volckmann was born Oct. 23, 1911 in Clinton, Iowa. He attended high school at Shattuck Military Academy in Fairbault, Minnesota, and graduated from the United States Military Academy as a second lieutenant of Infantry. He served as a rifle platoon leader and company executive officer in the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and as a company commander with the 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

In 1940, Capt. Volckmann was assigned to the Philippines as the company commander of Company H, 31st Infantry Regiment and the regimental executive officer of the 11th Infantry Regiment, 11th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army that fought a delaying action against the Japanese on December 8, 1941 from the Lingayen Gulf to Bataan. When Bataan fell in 1942, Capt. Volckmann refused to surrender and made contact with various resistance leaders.

After escaping from Bataan, he joined the guerrilla force under command of Col. Moses and Col. Noble that were operating in the northern part of the Philippines. After the capture of Moses and Noble in 1943, he assembled the remnants of the Philippine military and reorganized the guerrilla force. By the war's end, the force numbered more than 20,000. Under broad orders from Gen. Douglas MacArthur, he concentrated on the development of an organization and intelligence net, avoiding major clashes with the Japanese. For his wartime service, he received the Distinguished Service Cross.

With the escalation of the Korean War, the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Dwight W. Eisenhower directed Lt. Col. Volckmann to distill his World War II experiences into the Army's first official counterinsurgency doctrine. After releasing FM 31-20, Operations Against Guerrilla Forces. In September 1950, Gen. MacArthur assigned Col. Volckmann as executive officer of the Special Activities Group-Far East Command, responsible for planning and conducting guerrilla activities behind North Korean lines.

In 1951, Col. Volckmann authored FM 31-21, Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare and was assigned as the Chief of Plans for the Special Operations Division, Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare with Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure, Col. Aaron Bank, former guerrilla leader Col. Wendell Fertig and Col. Melvin Blair of "Merrill's Marauders."

After attending the National War College, he was assigned as the Chief of Special Operations Division, U.S. European Command. He completed the Basic Airborne Course at the age of 45 before serving as assistant division commander of the 82nd Airborne Division. Col. Volckmann was promoted to brigadier general on Dec. 31, 1956, and retired in 1957 with 27 years of service. He is credited with developing unconventional warfare doctrine that led to the establishment of the U.S. Army Special Forces.

Brig. Gen. Volckmann remained active in military matters related to special operations and led a Rand Corporation study panel on the feasibility of air support in counterinsurgency operations for the U.S. Air Force in 1962. He passed away on June 30, 1982.

The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Volckmann Training Center was memorialized in his honor.